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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography profiles 17 publications examining sex role attitudes/sex role stereotyping from the perspectives of ethnicity, gender, and age. Cited in the section on ethnicity are studies of work satisfaction/family functioning among working-class Mexican-American women and cultural variations in sex typing by students in the United States, Germany, and India. In the section devoted to gender, studies of the following are described: fathers' attitudes toward/experiences with parental leave; possible reasons for low numbers of females in intercollegiate debate; incongruence between spouses' sex role attitudes and division of family work; relationship between sex typing and gender schematicity; and sex role attitudes of adolescents reared primarily by their fathers. The studies included in the section on age examine the following: cultural and gender differences in young adolescents; relationship between television viewing and children's sex role attitudes/behaviors; effects of gender, race, religion, and political orientation on college freshmen's sex role attitudes; gender labeling, gender stereotyping, and parenting behaviors; predictors of adolescent self-appraisal; effects of stereotypes in children's literature on reading comprehension; sex roles and cultural diversity in award-winning children's picture books; sex roles and values of schoolchildren; process of ideological identify formation in rural adolescents; and media influences on adolescents. (MN)

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SEX ROLE ATTITUDES AND SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING: RECENT LITERATURE RESEARCH BULLETIN NO. 16

CAREER EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

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Sex Role Attitudes and Sex Role Stereotyping: Recent Literature

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The Office of Bilingual Education and Equity Issues, New Jersey Department of Education, through funding from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, P.L. 101-392, sex equity set aside sponsors a research library which is housed at and maintained by the Career Equity Assistance Center for Research and Evaluation at Montclair State University. The research library emphasizes materials on issues pertaining to gender equity and disseminates this recent research through a series of bulletins. This bulletin presents summaries of recent publications that deal specifically with the areas of sex role attitudes and sex role stereotyping.

In the recent literature, sex role attitudes and sex role stereotyping have been examined from a wide range of perspectives. The following bibliography focuses on three of these categories: ethnicity, gender and age.

Ethnicity

• Herrera, R.S. and DelCampo, R.L. (1995). Beyond the superwoman syndrome: Work satisfaction and family functioning among working-class, Mexican American women. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 17, 49-60.

The interaction of sex role attitudes, division of household and child care responsibilities, role strain, work satisfaction and family functioning was investigated among 87 working class Mexican American women in dual earner families with children. Respondents did not subscribe to the "superwoman" myth but, rather, endorsed an expansion of husbands' housework and child care roles.

• Murphy-Berman, V.A., et al. (1992). Cultural variations in sex typing: A comparison of students in the United States, Germany and India. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 132, 403-405.

Discusses a study of sex typing or adherence to defined sex roles in three different cultures: India, Germany and the United States. The authors report less sex typing in India than in either Western "modern" society. The article concludes that cultural traditionalism and rigidity in sex typing may not necessarily vary simultaneously.

Gender

• Hyde, J.S., et al. (1993). Fathers and paternal leave: Attitudes and experiences. *Journal of Family Issues*, 14, 616-638.

The authors examined behaviors related to taking parental leave and attitudes of 550 men whose wives/partners were pregnant. Fathers' mean length of leave time was five days; 91% of fathers took some leave. Employer's policy regarding length of leave was a significant predictor of length of leave taken. Fathers with egalitarian sex role attitudes took the longest leaves.

• Worthen, T.K. and Pack, G.N. (1992). *The Case of the Missing Female Debater: Sex Role Orientation or Sex Role Expectation.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (78th, Chicago, IL, October 29-November 1, 1992).

The possible reasons for low numbers of females in intercollegiate debate were investigated. Subjects, 164 debaters, completed a self assessment using the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Twenty-six debate judges completed an assessment of the sex role of the "ideal" debater. Among judges, 85% assess the "ideal" debater as masculine. A chi-square performed between the sex roles of a control group and the sex roles of female debaters showed a significant difference between the two populations. Findings suggest that the sex role orientation of the debaters and the sex role expectation of the judges may affect female participation in debate.

• McHale, S.M. and Crouter, A.C. (1992). You can't always get what you want: Incongruence between the sex role attitudes and family work roles and its implications for marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54, 537-547.

This study examined incongruencies between spouses' sex role attitudes and division of family work and link with marital evaluations and family characteristics. Findings from 153 couples revealed that wives with nontraditional sex role attitudes but traditional family work roles and husbands with traditional attitudes but egalitarian roles evaluated relationships more negatively compared to other women and men and to their own spouses.

• Freedman, S. A. (1992). *Sextyping and Gender Schematicity: A Tenuous Relationship*. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (100th, Washington, D.C., August 14-18, 1992).

Gender schematicity may be distinct from the quality of being sex typed or of endorsing societal values. Gender schematicity refers to the contents of a map or blueprint of what societal expectations regarding sex roles include. In Freedman (1992), Bem explains that individuals who are gender schematic will spontaneously evaluate information using gender as a category. Eighty female college students completed the Sex Role Behavior Inventory Short Form. Subjects who scored masculine or at the higher levels of androgynous, feminine, or undifferentiated were selected to participate in a reaction time experiment. The results of analyses revealed no expected relationship between sex typing and gender schematicity, suggesting that gender schematicity and sex typing are separate and distinct characteristics. Highly sex typed women did not appear to be highly gender schematic, nor did those reporting less sex typing appear to be less gender schematic.

• Williams, E., et al. (1992). Sex role attitudes of adolescents reared primarily by their fathers: An 11-year follow up. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 38, 457-476.

The authors studied the extent to which teenagers' expectations about gender role in career and family contexts were altered when traditional parental sex roles were partially reversed. Follow up data was used to depict the consequences of fathers on intact, white, middle-class families taking responsibility for their preschoolers' care.

Age

• Manning, M.L. (1993). Cultural and gender differences in young adolescents. *Middle School Journal*, 25, 13-17.

The author examines recent research on cultural and gender differences among early adolescents, focusing on friendship patterns, identity development, social expectations, self esteem, learning styles, achievement aspirations, and sex role attitudes and behaviors. Young adolescents benefited from middle level educators who provided opportunities for appreciating and celebrating cultural and gender differences.

• Signorielli, N. and Lears, M. (1992). Children, television, and conceptions about chores: Attitudes and behaviors. *Sex Roles*, 27, 157-170.

This article examines relationships between television viewing and sex role attitudes and behaviors for 530 fourth and fifth graders from the perspective of cultivation theory. Correlations and regression analyses reveal that television viewing is positively related to children's attitudes toward sex stereotyped chores. Those who watched more television expressed more traditional views.

• Lottes, I.L. and Kuriloff, P.J. (1992). The effects of gender, race, religion and political orientation on the sex role attitudes of college freshman. *Adolescence*, 27, 675-688.

The effects of 4 sex role measures on gender, race, religion and political orientation were examined for 556 first year college students. Liberals as compared to conservatives and Jews as compared to Protestants were less traditional in their attitudes toward female sexuality, less accepting of male dominance and more accepting of feminist attitudes.

• Fagot, B.I., et al. (1992). Gender labeling, gender stereotyping and parenting behaviors. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 225-230.

The authors examined gender labeling and gender stereotyping in toddlers and their relationship to mothers' sex role attitudes and responses to their children's sex typed behavior in a free play situation. Toddlers who understood gender labels displayed more knowledge of gender stereotypes than those who did not.

• Carbonneau, M.R., et al. (1993). Predictors of adolescent self appraisal: Perceptions of television characters versus peers. Research/ Technical Report 143. Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA.

In this study of 5th through 11th grade adolescents (n=133), their perceptions of their own life experiences were compared with those of their favorite television characters and the adolescent's closest friends. The congruence between the subjects' own personal experience of family restrictiveness, criticism, punitiveness, and sex roles and the experiences of both television characters and the adolescents' peers was assessed. The relationship between any incongruence and reported dissatisfaction was investigated in order to estimate the relative importance of television and peer role models. The influence of television and peers on body image and smoking was investigated. The relative importance of exposure to televised and real life role models was assessed by considering the individual that the adolescent reported admiring most. Findings revealed that, although dissatisfaction was associated with wishing one's own life more closely resembled television, the overall television-self experience discrepancy scores were not related to family dissatisfaction. This suggests that adolescents may not use the specific family experiences they observe on television in establishing the standards against which they evaluate their own circumstances.

• Rosen, J.K. (1995). *Sex-Role Stereotypes in Children's Literature and Their Effect on Reading Comprehension*. M.A. Project, Kean College of New Jersey, 106 pp.

Whether literary character sex role stereotyping in children's literature had a negative or positive effect on reading comprehension was investigated. The sample included 20 males and 20 females below average reading skills enrolled in a typical New York City public school. The children, who ranged in age from 8.5 to 9.3 years, were of either

Black or Hispanic origin and of low socioeconomic backgrounds, read a total of 12 stories during this study. Six selections portrayed male and female characters in traditional occupational roles. The other six selections portrayed male and female characters in nontraditional occupational roles. Results indicated that: (1) there was a significant difference in comprehension for the mixed gender population when reading about characters in nontraditional sex roles as opposed to characters portrayed in traditional sex roles; (2) the same results were true for the male population; but (3) the results for the female population supported the hypothesis of no significant difference in comprehension.

• Dellmann-Jenkins, M., et al. (1993). Sex roles and cultural diversity in recent award winning picture books for young children. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 7, 74-82.

The authors updated previous research on how gender is being presented in award-winning picture books for young children by replicating a study conducted by Collins, Ingoldsby and Dellmann in 1984. This study also extended the research design used in the prior investigation by examining the books for portrayal of both androgyny and cultural diversity.

• Salminen, S. (1994). Sex roles and values of school children using self-esteem as a moderating factor. *Adolescence*, 29, 875-884.

In these two separate studies of self-esteem, Study One showed that Finnish adolescents valued popularity more than academic and athletic success when compared to American students. Study Two revealed that students with low self-esteem embraced traditional sex roles more prominently than students with high self-esteem.

• Manners, P.A. and Smart, D.J. (1993). *An Exploration of the Process of Ideological Identity Formation in Young Rural Adolescents*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).

This paper explores the process of identity formation as related to adolescents' level of moral development, race, sex and family configuration. Ego identity was operationalized into four identity states based on an adolescent's reported degree of exploration and goal commitment in the areas of occupation, religion, politics and philosophy (ideological identity) and in the areas of friendship, dating, sex roles and recreation (interpersonal identity). Subjects were 288 ninth grade students (the entire class) from a small southeastern town. Ideological identity was related to sex, race and family configuration, but not to level of moral reasoning. No significant associations were found for interpersonal identity.

• Strasburger, V. C. and Comstock A., eds. (1993). Adolescents and the media. *Adolescent Medicine: State of the Art Reviews*, 4, 182 pp.

In the 1990's, the media represent the single most easily modifiable influence on children and adolescents. This series of articles offers medically oriented practitioners a review of current research on the influence of the media on children and adolescents.

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